

Miss Alice Paul on Hunger Strike (1917)

Suffragist Leader Adopts This Means of Protesting Against Washington Prison Fare.

NOW IN JAIL HOSPITAL

Threatens to Starve to Death Unless Better Food Is Provided
for Six Companions.

Anonymous

WASHINGTON. Nov. 6 – Alice Paul, National Chairman of the Woman's Party, now doing a seven months' sentence in jail here for picketing the White House, has gone on a hunger strike, and tonight she had been in the jail hospital without food for the preceding twenty- four hours, stolidly threatening to starve herself to death unless her six companions, serving time for the same offence, got better food.

So far the jail officials are taking the strike calmly and waiting for Miss Paul to get hungry enough to eat. Forcible feeding has not been discussed as yet. But in as much as Miss Paul made somewhat of a record for herself as a hunger striker in an English jail several years ago, while militating with Mrs. Pankhurst, headquarters of the Woman's Party is quite confident that she will give the prison officials a surprise if they expect her to yield quickly.

Miss Paul, a slight, little woman, weighing about ninety pounds and of delicate constitution, was taken to the jail hospital last night because she was ill. Miss Paul said she was ill because of bad food, bad air, and no exercise. Woman's Party officials say she and the other militants have been getting a coarse diet principally of salt pork and cabbage at the rate of eighteen times in thirteen days. When Miss Paul was taken to the hospital a diet, including milk and eggs and without the salt pork and cabbage, was offered her, but she announced she would have none of it unless her sister got the same.

Tonight, Dr. Cora Smith King, Miss Paul's physician, who was permitted to attend her, issued a bulletin saying Miss Paul was much thinner than when she entered the jail, Oct. 22, was refusing food, and would not touch a morsel until she and her companions received the same treatment as seventeen murderers, who have the privilege of special food, air, exercise, and the newspapers.

"If we are to be starved, I prefer to be starved at once." was the message Miss Paul sent out to the workers. "There is no use giving us special food today and not tomorrow simply to keep us alive as long as possible."

Although the militants have announced they will not resume picketing the White House until Congress reconvenes in December, they consider that a hunger strike is a sufficient climax, for the present at least, to their efforts to force President Wilson to indorse woman suffrage by Constitutional amendment.

Reference

Anonymous (1917). Miss Alice Paul on hunger strike. *The New York Times*. November 7. Available at <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1917/11/07/102646016.html?pageNumber=13>

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